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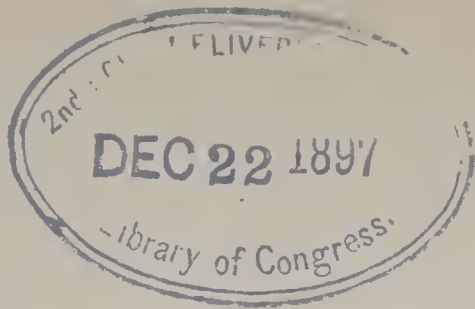
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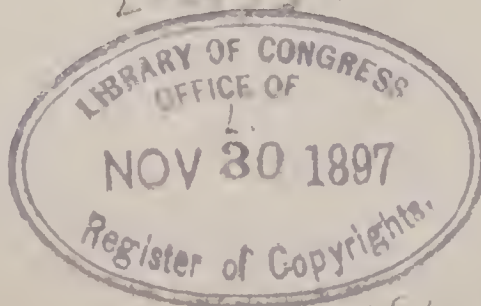
BY

CAROLINE STARR MORGAN

*Author of "Ways that Win," "Esther Lawrence," and
"Charlotte's Revenge"*



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From the Society's own Press

Affectionately Dedicated to
Charlie, Rhoda, and Cecile,
BY THEIR
"AUNT CARRIE"

*One, two,
Buckle my shoe.
Three, four,
Shut the door.
Five, six,
Pick up sticks.
Seven, eight,
Lay them straight.
Nine, ten,
A good, fat hen.
Eleven, twelve,
The old axe helve.*

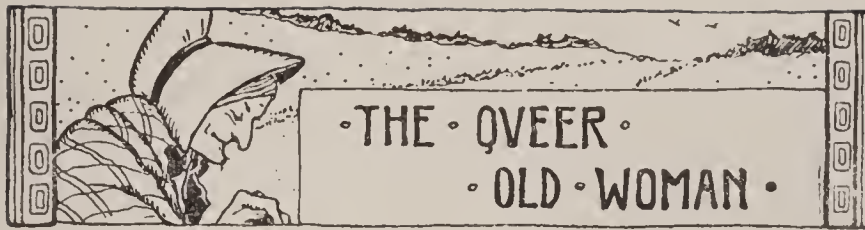
—Marmaduke Multiply.

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THE QUEER OLD WOMAN

*“One, two,
Buckle my shoe.”*



HAROLD MORTIMER, "Hal," as he was called for short, was a handsome boy, with flashing black eyes, wavy dark hair, a curling lip, and the air of a young prince.

He was only nine years old and still wore the shortest of knee breeches, broad white collars, and gay-colored ties, and when he happened to be in good humor, liked nothing better than to ride on his father's foot or cuddle in his mother's arms. But for all this, he was in his own opinion as important a person as the sun shone upon, and was quite sure that what Master Hal Mortimer did not know was not worth the knowing.

So it was no wonder that his little friends did not like him very much, for they thought they knew something too, and did not fancy being treated as if they

were nobodies, or good for nothing but to be ordered about by him. Because of this Hal did not have as happy a time as the other boys did, and he often wondered at it, for nobody else had such a beautiful home or so many fine things. Why, his was the only Shetland pony and baby dog-cart in town; his great St. Bernard was far bigger than any one's else dog, his croquet lawn the best, his playground the nicest, his clothes the handsomest, and there wasn't a single boy in the school who had a real gold watch, to say nothing about the chain, with the cunning little gold Bible for a charm.

There was not another boy whose father and mother let him do exactly what he wanted to do. Most of the boys and the girls too, had to mind whether they wanted to or not, but Hal, little as he was, knew very well that he ruled his father and mother, that his big sisters were his slaves, and that when he wanted his own way, all he had to do was to

scream and stamp his pretty slender foot which, little and dainty as it was in its high buttoned boot, could make a pretty big noise when he chose to have it do so.

So perhaps it is not surprising that he came to be a very willful, selfish little boy, who was bound to do as he had a mind to, who cared nothing for the rights of others, who never thought of such a thing as trying to make any one else glad or happy, and who was sour and cross if things did not go just as he wished to have them.

Handsome he was, to be sure, and bright and smart, and smiling and jolly when he could play the part of a little king, with all the school for his court. But he was so hateful when anything was asked of him that he did not like, and so unwilling that any one else should have a mind of his own, that he was disliked and shunned; while Harry Horton, who was homely and not very smart, and whose father was poor and lived in a little frame

house and sold flowers and garden truck for a living, was a great favorite and was always wanted in every game or bit of pleasure, whenever or wherever it might be.

Harry was a dear little boy, gentle, unselfish, always even-tempered and happy, and so obliging and self-forgetful that he was like a little ray of sunshine. He was always ready with kind words and bright smiles. Though his clothes were sometimes patched and he more than once had to stay at home to help his father in the garden or greenhouse, he was always missed and gladly welcomed back.

Now this state of things did not suit selfish Hal at all, and every day he grew more and more vexed at Harry. He made up faces at him on the sly, laughed at his clothes, teased him every time he had a chance, told naughty stories about him, and would have liked nothing better than to kick him with that pretty little foot of his, if he had only dared. All

this was because Harry was the favorite and he was not.

But the good fairy who had always loved Harry better than all the other boys and girls, made up her mind that proud, selfish Hal, should not hurt her especial pet. So, away off in the beautiful fairyland where she lived, she set some of her wonderful forces at work, and I'll try and tell you a little bit of what she did.

She sent pretty Eyrie, her fairy page, for her great golden mortar and her beautiful pestle, made of rock crystal, which sparkled like diamonds in the rainbow light of fairyland.

While he was gone she laid aside her beautiful, misty robes, which were made of lovely bits of the blue sky trimmed with borders of crimson clouds, and dressed herself in a common old cotton gown, with a big poke bonnet on her head, and queer pointed shoes, that were fastened with the funniest, old-fashioned steel buckles, on her feet. Then wrap-



ping herself in a cloud, which made her quite invisible to common eyes, she went sailing through the air, down, down, down, until she landed just a little ways from Hal, who was on his way home from school.

He was not in a very good temper, for nothing had gone to suit him that day. He had been full of play, instead of full of study, so his lessons had gone a-begging, and he had received several bad marks, which he was sure should never have been given to such an important boy as Hal Mortimer. But this wasn't all, for he had been reproved by his teacher for his selfishness in refusing to share a little of his lunch with little Fanny Harris, who had none while he had more than enough. And then that "hateful Willy Stone, mean thing," would not give him some of his peanuts, and said, "You sha'n't have any, because you never give me, or anybody else, any of yours."

No wonder that he was about as vexed as could be, and had a kind of a black thundercloud on his face that told the other boys, and the girls too, that they would better keep clear of him. So he was left all to himself, and was walking slowly along, kicking some little pebbles before him, thinking of what a horrid cross teacher he had, and what a stingy fellow Willy Stone was, when he suddenly caught sight of the queerest-looking little old woman coming toward him.

She was still quite a little ways off, so he took a good look at her, and then, very rudely, burst out laughing. She looked funny sure enough, with that big poke bonnet, the short calico gown, with its great, sprawling yellow flowers, and the odd blue umbrella; but he had no business to laugh at her as he knew well.

As they met she stuck out her foot, with its queer, old pointed shoe and the enormous steel buckle, that looked as if it might have come out of the ark.

“Good-morrow, my handsome little man,” she said, in a sharp, high voice. “Please to buckle my shoe; it’s unfastened, and I’m old and my back is weak and bent.

One, two, buckle my shoe,
Thorns are plenty, but roses are few.”

But selfish Hal had no notion of obliging anybody, especially such “a queer old thing,” so he made up a face, kicked out his foot at her, and ran off with all his might, calling her an “old beggar.” She shook her long finger at him, and went on, muttering angrily:

“One, two, buckle my shoe,
A pretty mess I’ll brew for you.”

She had not gone far before she met Harry Horton, not all by himself, as Hal was, but skipping along with two or three other boys. They had had good lessons and a happy day, so they were full of fun and frolic and ready for anything that might come along.

“Good-morrow, my pretty boys,” said the old woman, nodding her big bonnet, and thrusting out her foot, with its queer shoe and shining buckle. “Please won’t one of you buckle my shoe? It’s unfastened, and I am old, and my back is weak and bent.

One, two, buckle my shoe,
Roses are plenty, and thorns are few.”

“Oh, isn’t she funny?” exclaimed Harry, with a twinkle in his bright eye. “But, poor thing, I’ll do it,” and down he went on his knee, and slipped the strap through the big buckle in a trice, while the other boys looked on, wondering where in the world she could have come from. They all felt a good deal like laughing at such an oddity, but managed to hold the smiles in, and keep their faces straight.

She looked at them all with a knowing look, and patting Harry on the back with her skinny hand whispered:

“One, two, buckle my shoe,
Everything lovely is made for you,”

and then suddenly disappeared, in the most mysterious fashion.

The boys looked at each other in astonishment. What could have become of her? and who in the world was she?

“Oh, I bet she was a fairy,” said Willy Stone.

“A fairy!” repeated Charlie Hale. “Why, fairies are always beautiful, and she was too ugly for anything. You can’t make me believe that she was a fairy.”

“If she had been a beautiful fairy, I’d just have fastened her shoe quick,” said Johnny Ray.

“So would I,” said Bert Mason; “but she was such a queer old thing that I didn’t want to touch it, and I wondered that Harry did.”

“Oh, he’ll do anything for anybody, you know,” said Willy Stone.

“Well, it didn’t hurt,” said Harry

laughing; “and poor old soul, I felt sorry for her. But let’s see who’ll get to the liberty pole first,” and off they went, while the old woman from her invisible cloud watched them as if she too enjoyed the fun.

“Oh, the bonny boys!” she said to herself. “‘Pretty is that pretty does,’ and they might all be pretty if they had a mind to, for a pretty face doesn’t count for much, after all, as that saucy Hal shows every day of his poor little life. He’d better have been on his good behavior, as he’ll soon find out,” and drawing the soft, invisible cloud a little more closely around her, she floated away, clear away, to the distant fairyland, where she dropped her old garments and was again the lovely fairy. Charlie Hale would have exclaimed then, for she was just as beautiful as he was sure all fairies were, and ought to be.

A little group of fays gathered about her, to hear of all she had seen and done,



and Eyrie came bringing the golden mortar and crystal pestle, all ready to receive his further orders, which the good fairy gave in a decided way that showed she knew exactly what she was going to do.

“ It will go hard with that selfish Hal,” whispered one little fay to another, with a wise shake of his head; “ but we won’t feel sorry about it, for he is so selfish that he deserves it,” and gathering around Eyrie and the fairy, they watched to see what she would do.

She stood before the great golden mortar, and opening several little packages that Eyrie handed her, dropped the fine black seeds that each contained, into it. Then she took the crystal pestle, that sparkled with all the colors of a rainbow, and with quick motions crushed them until the little seeds became a fine black powder, all the time murmuring a little song, which no one but fairies could understand. When the seeds had all disappeared, and the powder was as fine as

could be, she put it into a little bag, made of the edge of a black thunder cloud, and gave it to Eyrie, who hung it carefully on a golden peg.

After this she did the same thing again, although this time the seeds she put into the mortar were all white, instead of black, and the song she sang was far sweeter than the other one. Again the sparkling pestle went busily up and down, and again the crushed seeds were turned into a fine powder, but this time it was of a silvery white, instead of a sombre black.

When the mixture was all ready, there was Eyrie with another little bag, which just seemed to fit the shining pestle and glowing mortar, for it was formed out of a little streak of sunshine, which had lost its way and was happy because it had been found. It was just big enough to hold the silvery powder, which was as fragrant as the sweet lilies-of-the-valley. It was filled and securely closed.

The orders were given to the little page

who stood waiting while the train of fays stayed around eagerly listening. Then with a touch of her magic wand, the fairy turned him into a snow-white carrier pigeon, and away he flew, with a tiny bag under each wing, while a whole chorus of fairies, big and little, chanted a lovely melody, which wished him good speed on his errand.

He knew his way well, for he was one of the trusted messengers of fairyland, and had been on many such trips before. So he skimmed through the air, quite at home, though unseen and unheard by the dull eyes and ears down on the earth, and finding his way into Hal's pretty bedroom, dropped one of the little bags on his upturned face, as he lay fast asleep on his dainty bed.

It opened noiselessly, and a fine black powder covered him from head to foot. It fell so gently that it did not waken him, and quickly forming into a dark, dense cloud, it bore him off, away, away

from his pleasant home toward fairyland far in the distance, while the white-winged messenger sped on his farther journey to Harry's humble home.

There he was, in the bright and early morning, working away in his father's garden, and saying some of his lessons over to himself. The snowy pigeon hovered over him for a minute or two, but Harry did not see him, and then dropped the little silvery bag gently on his curly head. He felt something but knew not what, and looking up to see, was suddenly lifted from the ground, and the next minute felt himself floating through the air, as light as a feather, although he could not imagine what was carrying him along.

A thin veil, or something like it, seemed to wrap him about, or else his eyes were shut so tight that he could not open them, for he could see nothing, and wondered what had happened and where he could be going all that long time. Someway it

seemed to be all right and he was not a bit afraid, which was surprising, as he was rather a timid, shy little boy. Then the feeling, as if he were being borne through the air on wings, was delightful, and he had half a mind to wish it would keep on for a long time.

At last it stopped, his eyes were suddenly opened, and he found himself in the most charming place, where everything beautiful he had ever thought or dreamed of, seemed to be gathered. Lovely beings, quite different from any he had ever seen on earth, were moving about on all sides; birds of radiant plumage were singing the sweetest songs, and such flowers as had never graced his father's greenhouse, choice as it was, were blooming on every side, filling the air with the most delicious fragrance.

Everything was so new and beautiful that he looked around bewildered and confused, hardly knowing what had happened to him, and fearing lest all would

vanish before he knew what it meant. But that sense of strangeness lasted for only a moment, for a choir of lovely little fays, in shimmering dress, formed a circle around him, and singing, "Welcome, welcome," in sweetest tones, each kissed his hand, and presented him with her favorite flower.

Then the fairy came to meet him, carrying a sparkling coronet, and looking as if she was the sweetest being in the universe.

"You were a dear child on the earth below," she said gently; "kind, modest, unselfish, and truthful. You ever forgot yourself and tried to make others happy, and now it is your turn, for such a life always has its reward. I crown you a fairy prince for a thousand and one days, which will seem only one week to your friends, and welcome you gladly to our beautiful fairyland, which always rejoices to greet such a pure spirit," and waving her magic wand, she placed the

sparkling circle on his head, and kissing his hand whispered :

“ One, two, buckle my shoe,
Everything lovely is made for you.”

“ Oh, I know you, I know you,” he exclaimed joyously. “ You were the queer old woman, in the big poke bonnet and buckled shoes, and I guess that you came down to earth just to see what we boys would do. We wondered and wondered what became of you, and oh, how glad I am that I did what you asked me ! It will be just beautiful to live in fairy-land.”

“ That is because you are worthy of it, for none but those who are unselfish and true-hearted can breathe in its pure air. Others would stifle.”

“ But I am such a homely little boy that I shouldn't think you'd want me where everything is so beautiful,” said Harry rather sadly.

“ I have cared for that,” she said,

with her sweet smile. "You have not seen yourself since the touch of my magic wand, and the placing of the crown on your head." She gently turned him around, and as he caught a glimpse of himself and his glittering train of attendant fays in one of the great crystal mirrors he gave an exclamation of astonishment and delight at the sight.

Hal too reached fairyland in the black cloud which had borne him away, but his journey had been a dreary one. There had been rumblings and strange noises around him; it was very dark and he could see nothing, and the air was hot and oppressive. He felt that he was being carried along, though he could not imagine by what, and was sure something dreadful was happening to him.

Instead of wishing, like Harry, that he could float on for a long time, he longed to stop, though half afraid of what was coming next. Stop at last he did, for as the cloud touched the golden gate into



fairyland, it burst open with a roaring noise, which frightened him, and before him stood the queer old woman, with the poke bonnet and the buckled shoes.

“One, two, buckle my shoe,
Thorns are many, and roses are few,”

she muttered, in angry voice. “You didn’t expect to see me here, did you, my pretty boy?”

Her eyes flashed as she spoke; she stamped her foot; and Hal was scared, wondering what she was going to do next. His conscience pricked him a little in his fear, and so he said, in trembling tones:

“I wish I had done what you asked me to, and hadn’t called you names.”

“Oh, you know me, I see, my poor little man; but it’s too late to be sorry now. You ought to have thought of that sooner. This is fairyland, where I dwell when I am not down on earth looking after the boys and girls. I found out all

about you there, and this is no place for such as you. Selfish, willful children, those who think of no one but themselves, who are never ready to do for others, who are ever taking, but never giving, would be out of place where all is love, and where each one takes for his motto the Golden Rule."

"Oh, dear, dear, what is going to become of me?" thought poor Hal with a shudder. "I wish I'd been different."

"We have a place for such as you, where, whether you like it or not, you must live for others' good, and there you shall stay, doing without a word of complaint just what you are told to do."

"Oh, I will, I will," said Hal obediently, hardly daring to utter a word. "But for how long?"

"That depends upon yourself," she replied. "Show us what you can do, and then we shall know how to answer your question; but no more of this now," and taking him by the hand, she led him

away from the delights he longed to share, and pointing to a certain corner of a gloomy room she said :

“Fairyland needs new workmen; the tiny snow-white horses of our new young prince, your old schoolmate, Harry Horton, wear golden shoes. Here is your forge, here your tools, and here shall you spend your days in work, here, right in sight of the joys and pleasures of our enchanting world.” Then dropping her grotesque garb, she was changed into a vision of wondrous beauty and disappeared in a blaze of glory through the lofty, jeweled gates, softly singing :

“One, two, buckle my shoe,
Thorns are many, and roses are few.”

Poor Hal, after watching for the last glimpse of her, sank down on the hard floor, and covering his face with his hands, burst into penitent tears.



THE CLEVER PARROT

*“ Three, four,
Shut the door.”*



HER real name was Kitty Ray, and she was a bright little ten-year-old girl, who lived in a pleasant home, had many brothers and sisters, and was a great pet, not only with them, but with almost every one who knew her. She was an eager, earnest little body, full of life and spirits, and so affectionate and so pretty in her ways and manners that it was easy enough to love her.

But in spite of all this she had another name and it was not a nice name at all, for when any one spoke of "Heedless Kitty," every one knew that it meant little Kitty Ray, this same pretty Kitty. Wasn't it a shame? Indeed it was; but sad to say, the name belonged to her. She had fairly earned it for a long time before, and as each day went by it seemed to belong to her more and more, for if anywhere in all the wide, wide

world there was a heedless, forgetful little girl, it was this same pretty Kitty.

“She is getting worse and worse all the time,” said her sister Agnes, who was a very methodical young lady and had little patience with Kitty’s carelessness.

“That’s so,” growled her big brother Fred. “She ought to be tied up until she learns to remember to shut the doors and gates after her. The pigs had a walk in her favorite flower garden this morning, and come to find out, she had left both gates wide open as usual.”

“Why, it would be just dreadful to tie her up,” said tender-hearted little Will; “and she’ll be heartbroken when she finds that the pigs have spoiled all her pretty flowers.”

“It’s her own fault,” replied Fred. “She never thinks of such a thing as shutting either doors or gates behind her. It’s a nuisance, and she ought to be broken-hearted. Can’t help loving her,

though," he added gently, "she's such a bewitching dot of a thing."

"I should think she'd get dreadful tired of hearing 'Shut the door, shut the door!' 'Don't forget, don't forget!' whenever she's going anywhere or going to do anything," said little Will sympathizingly. "I couldn't stand it."

"She's so used to it that I suppose she doesn't mind it much," answered Agnes. "It would be better if she did; perhaps then she would remember. I don't see what in the world we are going to do about it; it seems impossible to break it up."

"Oh, I'm seized with an idea!" exclaimed Fred, jumping up and clapping his hands.

"What is it? what is it?" eagerly asked Will, clapping his small hands in sympathy.

"Oh, that's a secret," replied Fred. "But I'm going to play a joke on her, teach her a lesson; and I venture to

promise that I'll make her come to time. It will be jolly good fun," and he went through an open window, turning a somersault over a chair on the way, seeming to be bubbling over with glee.

"I do wonder what he has in mind?" thought Agnes. "Some mischief, I am sure."

Kitty loved pets, especially birds, very dearly, and they seemed to love her. She had a lot of little downy chickens that would follow her about as if they thought more of her than of all the world besides, and her little brown ducks would waddle out of the water whenever they saw her coming. Her four snow-white fantail pigeons would sit on her shoulders and coo as if they were saying, "I love you, I love you." Her bright yellow canary would perch on her wrist and eat his tiny breakfast from her dainty little hand; the sparrows would flock about her whenever she was seen and chatter their admiration of her; and in winter when she



opened the window, the little snow-birds would come from no one knew where, to pick up the crumbs which she scattered with a lavish hand.

But her especial pride and glory was her African parrot, and a splendid fellow he was—large, handsome, and smart—and as devoted to Kitty as she was to him, which is saying much. He learned very readily; she had taught him many bright sayings, and sometimes they would carry on quite a conversation. He would sit on her shoulder, eat out of her hand, pretend to cry when she told him to, laugh in a queer fashion of his own, and perform quite a number of little tricks for her, which he would do for no one else.

Now Fred took him in training and kept at it when Kitty was not about, until the clever fellow had learned his lesson perfectly.

No one could explain how he came to show off at just the right minute; but one day when Kitty, in a great hurry to be



off for school, went rushing through the house, leaving every door open behind her, he called out in a loud, commanding voice:

“ Three, four, shut the door ;
Three, four, shut the door !
Heedless Kitty, shut the door,
Don’t forget to shut the door,
Don’t forget, don’t forget.
Three, four, shut the door ! ”

Kitty stopped suddenly ; her books fell to the floor ; and she looked the picture of astonishment. She did not know whether to laugh or to cry, although she was so taken by surprise that she felt a good deal more like crying than like laughing.

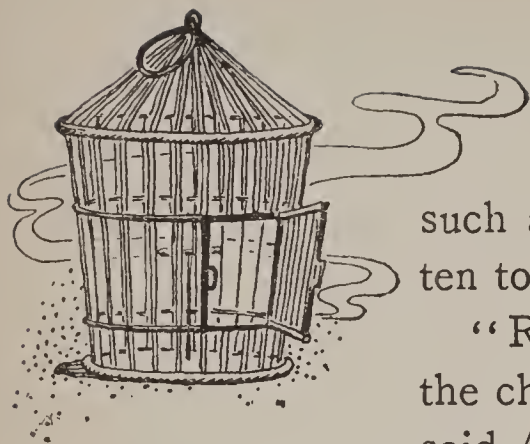
“ Well done, Master Poll ! ” shouted teasing Fred, and there was a general laugh and clapping of hands at the expense of poor Kitty, who looked as if she might be glad to borrow the wings of some of her favorite birds and fly away. But she picked up her books and was starting away when Poll called out,

“Want some breakfast, want some breakfast; mighty hungry, mighty hungry!” and then she remembered that she had not given him his morning meal, which was her special duty.

When she came home in the afternoon, she heard a terrible piece of news that nearly took her breath away. Poll had disappeared! Though diligent search had been made in every direction, he was nowhere to be found.

“Oh, how did it happen? how did it happen?” cried Kitty in distress. “Who had any business to meddle with my precious Poll?”

“Why, my dear Kitty, you had not been gone long,” said her mother, “when I went into the room. To my great surprise the cage was empty, its door wide open, and Master Poll, after having devoured every mouthful of the breakfast you gave him, had evidently taken himself off on a ‘pleasure excursion,’ as Fred remarked. When you fed him in



such a hurry you must have forgotten to shut the door."

"Rather hard on Poll, after all the charges he had just given you," said Agnes.

"Oh, oh!" moaned poor Kitty, the tears raining down her face. "How could I have done it?"

"It beats me," said Fred; "and after he had talked to you like a Dutch uncle! Anyway, he did his duty, and you have only yourself to blame."

"It's too bad, Kitty," said Agnes, "and I am ever so sorry for you. But after this perhaps you will have your wits about you and try to make some use of the head on your shoulders."

"But do you suppose that I'll ever, ever find him?"

"Can't say," answered Fred. "It doesn't look very much like it just at present, for we have been hunting for him for hours. You would better make up your mind to give him up, I guess,

and then set to work to 'turn over a new leaf,' which would be a good thing for the rest of us, for we're sick of your slipshod ways."

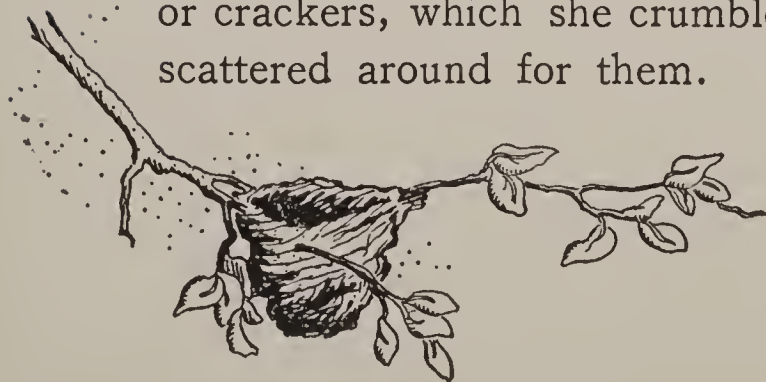
"But I might turn over a dozen new leaves and it wouldn't bring back my poor, dear, beautiful Poll," wailed Kitty in a fresh burst of grief, too sorry over her faults to resent anything that might be said to her; then, crying as if her heart would break, she rushed off to the beautiful grove not far away, which was her favorite resort at all times, especially when she was either very sad or very glad.

It was a charming spot, with its great branching trees and velvety carpet of mossy green, which just now, dotted with lights and shadows and spangled with tiny blue wild flowers, was as rich as the choicest carpet that ever was made. It sloped down to the edge of a silvery lake, the farther side of which was full of little inlets and jagged points that were

fringed with drooping willows. Here and there was a wee bit of green island, or a rugged rock lifted its head out of the clear water.

Just now, in the leafy month of June, the grove was musical with the merry or plaintive notes of several kinds of birds. Kitty knew where there were many nests, and had often said that if there was such a thing as a fairyland for the birds, this must be the very spot of all others.

Every day she would run down there for at least a few minutes, and was never happier than when she could stay for a long time. Sometimes she would learn her lessons there. At other times, she would take a favorite story book, and sitting in her pet seat, a most easy, comfortable crook in a great tree, she would read and read. At the same time she would enjoy the chatter of the birds about her, for she seldom went without cakes or crackers, which she crumbled up and scattered around for them. Sometimes



she would take her little school singing book and sing and sing, with the birds joining in the chorus, until she had fairly sung herself out. So you see what pleasant times she had in the beautiful grove and how easy it was for her to love it.

But to-day she thought neither of stories nor of singing, and even her special friends, the birds, were quite forgotten, for her heart was truly almost broken. She threw herself on the soft grass, crying bitterly, and sobbing out:

“Poor, dear Poll, poor, dear Poll! What shall I do, what shall I do? Why didn’t I shut the door, oh, why didn’t I? I’ll never leave doors open again, never, never!”

By and by she wept more quietly, and was just making up her mind that she must go and search and search and never give up until she had found her precious, lost treasure, when she heard the tinkling of a sweet bell in the distance which seemed to come nearer and nearer, and

then there was a sudden splashing in the water.

She looked up quickly, and from the other side of the lake there darted out from one of the leafy inlets the most beautiful little boat. Its sails were of bright blue, as if made of a bit of the summer sky, and it was wreathed with the loveliest and most fragrant flowers. Large, stately swans swam around it, like a guard of honor; dainty humming birds flew in and out among the flowers; and the most lovely music seemed to float through the air above it. Kitty drew a long breath of delight, and running quickly down to the water's edge, waited curiously to see what was going to happen.

"What can it be?" she thought. "Where and who am I? Am I Kitty Ray, or some one else?" and she almost held her breath in her eagerness.

The little boat drew nearer, the swans parted to each side, the music ceased,

and as it touched the shore, there came out from among the flowers a most beautiful being.

“Oh, who are you?” gasped Kitty, enchanted with the sight. “I didn’t know that there was anything so lovely in all the world.”

“Ah, there isn’t,” was answered in sweetest tones. “I dwell in fairyland, and there all is loveliness and beauty.”

“Then what makes you want to come down here, where so many things are poor and ugly?” asked Kitty.

“Because our kind fairy queen made me the good genius of the birds, and sometimes when they, or those who love them and are kind to them, are in trouble, she sends me down to help them.”

“Oh, I love the birds and am good to them, and I am in trouble, oh, such dreadful trouble!” Kitty burst out, with her heart in her mouth.

“Yes, I know all about it, and that is why I came,” she answered, softly cool-

ing Kitty's hot, crimson cheeks with a soft breath from her fan of sunset hues. "The birds whisper lovely things about you, and from our fairy home we look down and see how you love them and care for them. Your tender heart does not forget even the sparrows, and though you are a heedless little girl, you have the love of the bright spirits of fairyland, and we will help you if you will only help yourself."

"Help me to find dear, beautiful Poll?" asked Kitty eagerly.

"Yes, and to find yourself; that is," she added gently, "we will help you to overcome your heedless, careless, forgetful ways, so that you will no longer give yourself and every one else so much annoyance and trouble."

"But Poll!" said Kitty anxiously, still full of her great loss.

"Poll is quite safe. He is under my own care, and just as soon as no one has to say, 'Shut the door,' 'Don't forget,'

to Kitty Ray, just as soon as she is no longer 'Heedless Kitty,' Poll shall be hers again."

"Oh!" replied poor Kitty, in a hopeless tone, "I am afraid that will never be. But I do feel dreadfully bad about being so heedless, although they think I don't care, and I will try, oh, so very hard, just as hard as ever I can."

"That is right, Kitty," said the fairy. "Try and try all the time, and sometimes when you get discouraged, I will whisper a little loving word right into your ear, and help you to remember, for you love my beautiful birds and your heart is pure and true."

A sudden shower of fragrant rose-buds, crimson, pink, and white, fell all over and around Kitty, and when she looked up, the little skiff was gone, the fairy music was dying away in the distance, and the bright sunset was tinting the water with a pale, rosy flush and lighting up the grove with a golden glory.

Kitty's mother had often told her that if she would only set earnestly about it, she could overcome her heedless ways, and sometimes she used to think she was trying very hard. But she never tried very long, and had about made up her mind that it was of no use to try at all. Now she began to try in real earnest, and although it was pretty hard, soon made such a change that they all spoke of it and wondered what had happened to her.

Once in a while, just as she was about to leave something undone, a sweet voice would whisper in her ear, "Remember," and she would know that the good genius of her pets, the birds, had not forgotten her promise. But the weeks and months went by and no Poll appeared, and she was almost discouraged. But one happy day—oh, joy!—when she came home from school Willie was watching for her and called out wildly:

"Oh, Kitty, Poll's in the cage! The door was shut, and no one knows how

he got in, or where he came from. It must be a miracle."

Kitty was so eager that she screamed with delight and fairly flew into the room, forgetting all her good resolves, and leaving the door wide open behind her. True enough, there was her beautiful Poll on his perch, as large as life and handsomer than ever.

"Oh, you precious darling!" she exclaimed, almost crying for very joy; "you shall never, never, go away from me again."

"Don't be too sure," replied Poll, as sober as a judge; but looking at Kitty with a twinkle in his eye, and casting a sidewise glance at the open door, he added in his sharp, but deep voice:

"Three, four, shut the door,
Three, four, shut the door!
Don't forget to shut the door,
Don't forget to shut the door,
Don't forget, don't forget."

Rushing wildly back, Kitty gave the

door a bang which rang through the house and, strange to say, that was the very last time that wise Poll or anybody else had to say, "Shut the door" to thoughtful Kitty.



PHIL'S THREE WISHES

*“ Five, six,
Pick up sticks.”*



IN a neat little frame house, on the edge of a pleasant village, there lived a father and mother who were rich in—what do you think? Well, in nothing but a flock of bright-eyed boys and girls. They were not so very poor though in other things, for Mr. Murray, a big, strong, good-natured man, was a skilled carpenter who earned excellent wages, and his wife was a smart woman and tidy housekeeper, who knew how to save the pennies as fast as they came in, which is a capital thing to know.

Then work was plenty, which is pretty apt to be the case when men know how to do it well. Sickness had never come near them. With half a dozen little hungry mouths to fill and a horse and cow to take care of, it was sometimes hard work to make the ends meet; but they

managed to live very comfortably and lay up a little every year besides.

All the children but the two-year-old baby went to the big public school near by and were so healthy and fresh looking, so clean and neat in their plain clothes, that it was a real pleasure to look at them.

So the home, though small and plainly furnished, was bright and pleasant; the children were happy; the garden always had the sweetest flowers and the nicest vegetables; and even Jerry, the horse, and Jill, the cow, were fat, sleek, and happy looking, just as if they felt that they had a good time too. And there were also Rover, the handsome shepherd dog, and Spot, the big tortoise-shell cat, to say nothing about the old pig and its little ones or the flocks of turkeys, ducks, and chickens. They all were so good-natured and cheerful that they plainly felt they were having a good time.

Mrs. Murray was a busy, wide-awake

woman who had not a lazy bone in her, and was determined her children should not have either. "You will have to work for your living all your lives; nobody will earn it for you after your father is gone," she used to say to them; "and you may just as well begin while you're young." So each of them was given some especial work to do, and it was well understood that play could not begin until that especial bit of work was done, and well done.

Sometimes this seemed pretty hard to them, as they did not like to work any better than other boys and girls like it. But they grew used to it after a while, and did not mind it very much, except little Phil, whose business it was to "pick up sticks," as his mother said; that is, to keep the lawn, garden, and pasture clean and free from sticks, stones, and rubbish of all kinds, and he got into the naughty way of grumbling a good deal about it.





He had been grumbling ever since he had seen Ned Hawkins, a boy from New York, who was visiting in the village and who wore a velvet suit, lace collars and cuffs, and the most stylish patent-leather buttoned boots. He wished that he too lived in New York, and could wear beautiful clothes, and see all the wonderful things that Ned, who was a pretty big talker for a little boy, told about. It was just "horrid" to have to live in a little village and a little house, to wear plain clothes and pick up sticks when other boys, no better or brighter than he, lived in fine houses in great cities, had beautiful things to wear, and best of all, nothing to do.

More than once he had overheard people say that he was "very smart," and one day little Fanny Wheaton told him that her Aunt Sally had said that "Phil Murray was as handsome as a picture." So he grew more and more discontented, made up his mind that he was greatly

abused, and, little fellow that he was, had about made up his mind to run away somewhere, anywhere, off into the big splendid world, where there would be such lots to see, and where he would never have to pick up any more of those hateful sticks and things.

Phil liked fairy stories wonderfully well. "Oh, if I just had a magic wand!" he thought one bright summer day as he threw himself down on a great pile of hay out in the big meadow not far from the house. "Wouldn't I fix things up to suit myself though? I would change this stupid little town into a wonderful city, this ugly little house into a grand palace, and I would be the handsomest and best-dressed boy that ever lived."

"That's just what you ought to be," said a soft voice near him. He heard a rustling in the hay, and turning his head saw standing at his side a dainty, fairy-like creature who hardly seemed to touch the earth. "Hush!" she said, as he

started to speak, and waved a golden scepter before him. "This is my magic wand; you cannot have it, but I have come to use it for you."

"For me, for me!" he exclaimed with delight. "What can you do with it?"

"Listen," she answered. "I know how you feel. You are a beautiful boy, far handsomer than Ned Hawkins; you are smart and your spirit is high and proud. This is no place for you, and it is no wonder that you cannot feel at home. You ought to have been born a prince."

"Oh, I know it, I know it!" he exclaimed. "Something has been whispering that to me for a long time. And why wasn't I?"

"That is neither here nor there," answered the fairy, "but it was a great mistake, and I am come with my fairy chariot to take you where you belong, and where beauty, grace, and wit such

as yours will receive praise and admiration, instead of being slighted. A poor little house, a plain, common father and mother, brothers and sisters whose eyes are so blinded that they cannot see how lovely you are, and a place where everybody has to work and scrub for his daily bread, are not for you."

"Oh, I know it, and I just hate such things. I'd like to get away from them just as quick as I can, the sooner the better, and it will be ever so jolly. But where are you going to take me?"

"That is for you to say. You must make three wishes, and they will be granted at once. But you must promise beforehand that you will be content with what you decide on, and not wish afterward that you had chosen something else. Now you can wish."

"Of course I'll be pleased, for I know exactly what I want," replied Phil excitedly. "But what shall I say first? Let me see. Well, 'one to begin': I

want to live in a great, grand house, in some big city; New York's the biggest, I guess, so I'd like to go there."

"You know there are some pleasant things about a little village like this; are you sure you'd like a city better?"

"Why, what a funny question! Of course I would, and I'd soon forget all about this homely, stupid little place. I'm just sick of it and don't care if I never see it again."

"Well, what next?"

"Just wait a minute till I see what I want to have come first. Now then, 'two to show': I would like to have a rich father and mother, like Ned Hawkins, and be the only child, just as he is. Then I can have everything I want, and not have to divide up, the way I do now. I hate that."

"That sounds very fine, but are you sure you could get along without this father and mother and your brothers and sisters?"

“Oh, yes, they don’t care about the things I do; they like work; they seem to think it’s fun, real fun. They aren’t a bit like me; and if I have everything else I wouldn’t miss them.”

“Very well. What’s the other wish?”

“That’s the question. What do you think about it? I wish you’d tell me.”

“Oh, I’m not going to help you; you must decide for yourself, and remember it is your last chance.”

“Oh, well then, I know: I never want to work a bit again in all my life. I’ve had enough of it. I never want to hear, ‘Five, six, pick up sticks,’ again as long as I live. I do hope that they don’t have any sticks and rubbish in New York; of course they don’t. Won’t I be too grand and happy for anything, though?”

“You’ve got a pretty old head on young shoulders,” said the fairy, with a laugh; “and now for the touch of my magic wand, which will turn all these wishes into realities! Are you ready?”

“ Oh, yes, yes ! ” said Phil eagerly. “ I can hardly wait ; and I just wish you ’ d hurry up. Good-bye, everybody ; good-bye forever, ” he murmured, as the fairy waved the magic wand gently over him.

She blew a little silver whistle, and there suddenly appeared a golden chariot, to whose wheels were attached the most wonderful spreading wings, all gleaming with jewels which sparkled in the sunlight. Almost before he knew it, he was lying on the silken cushions, with a little fay beside him, who waved a starry fan above him, and a tiny footman, who held a gorgeous umbrella, made of a bit of the sunset clouds, over his head.

The golden chariot went gliding through the air at a surprising speed, for it was borne along by the wide-spreading wings as if it were a bird. The fairy was seated beside him, a long train of fays followed, sailing gracefully through the air, and he was just wishing that he might ride a long time, when they came to a stop, and he

found himself in the most beautiful house he had ever dreamed of.

Strangely enough, it did not seem at all new to him; it was at once as if he had always been there, and he went about as naturally as could be. A handsome, richly dressed woman and a grand, stately man called him "my son"; everything seemed to be his; he came and went as he chose, did what he had a mind to, and whenever he wished for anything it suddenly was there in some mysterious fashion. How delightful it all was!

And his clothes! Such lots of them as there were! Why, the big closet and bureau in his large room did not begin to hold them. They overflowed into other rooms and closets, were as handsome as they could be, and in the height of style. Ned Hawkins' weren't to be compared to them. He had a fresh lace collar, and a clean embroidered handkerchief, all sweet with the choicest perfume—of which he was very fond—every day.

His own bedroom, with a large sitting room opening out of it, was fine enough for a prince. Such furniture, carpets, draperies, and mirrors he had never heard of, and when he looked in the great one between the large windows, and saw such a handsome little fellow, so finely dressed and so stylish looking, he was not quite sure whether it was really himself or not. He did not seem to have a thought of the old times; they vanished completely from his mind; this beautiful place had always been his home, always would be, and he was about as happy as a boy could be.

He had beautiful books, pictures, and games, so much pocket money that he hardly knew what to do with it, and a gay little bicycle, the one thing of all others he had most wanted. But such an one as this he had never dreamed of, for it was all hung around with little tinkling silver bells, which seemed to say, "I'm coming, I'm coming," and was the envy of all the boys in the neighborhood.



But his choicest possession was a coal-black pony, with flowing mane and tail and dainty white feet, and when he rode in Central Park or on the Boulevard, attended by a groom in livery, and saw how people turned to look after him, he thought he was about the happiest, most fortunate boy that ever lived. It was all so delightful that his dear old hard-working father and mother, teasing Robbie, and the rest of them, never troubled his memory, and he never wanted to hear of school or work again as long as he lived.

This lasted for many months, and had the wise fairy who whirled him away in her golden chariot, whispered in his ear that he would tire of it all, or ever want anything else, he would not have believed her.

But after a time, some way he did not seem to be quite so happy, although he could not quite tell why. He did not care so much about his books, pictures, and games; he was tired of his bicycle;

his coal-black pony did not go half so fast as it used to; his fine clothes did not look near as handsome as they once did; he did not see anything he wanted to buy; and the boys and girls who lived near by did not seem to care to play with him very much. Time hung heavy on his hands, and he was almost ready to go to school or to work at something, if there was only anything to do; but there was not; school or work was never mentioned.

He was by no means ready to admit though that he was tired of it all and homesick, and so he tried to act as if he enjoyed himself as much as ever. But one day in the street he caught sight of a little boy who looked like Robbie, and he could stand it no longer. As soon as he got home he had a big cry and thought he would give everything he had if he could only see mamma, Lucia, and Robbie. The more he thought about it the more he longed for them and for the little old home he used to dislike so much. Sad,

hard days for poor Phil went by, for in spite of the great city, the beautiful house, the fine clothes, and everything else he had once wanted so much, he had a hungry little heart and could find no comfort in anything.

One morning in the pretty arbor of the long, lovely garden, he laid his curly head down on the seat and cried and cried until he was sure there could not be any tears left.

“Hoity, toity!” exclaimed a gay, light voice near him. “A pretty little boy like you, a boy who has everything in the world he wants, shouldn’t waste his time crying like that. What’s the matter?”

“Matter enough,” replied Phil, through his tears. “But who are you? I can’t see any one.”

“No, I keep out of sight on purpose; but you know me all the same. I’m a good fairy and am bound on an errand of mercy.”

“I never, never want to see a fairy again,” said Phil; “and I just wish they’d keep away. They only bring trouble, though they pretend to be our great friends.”

“Why, what have they done to you? I for one have a tender heart, and it hurts me to have you cry.”

“Oh, I know your voice!” said Phil, starting eagerly forward. “It was you who brought me here. Oh, what made you do it? I just wish you had not.”

“Fie, fie, what a foolish boy! You ought to be as happy as the day is long, for you got just what you asked for and wanted so much; and here you are crying about it and scolding me. What nonsense!”

“But I didn’t want it, after all,” sobbed Phil. “I thought I did, but I didn’t, oh, I didn’t, and I want to go back.”

“What! want to go back to that horrid little village and ugly little house,

away from this great city and splendid mansion? What's the matter with the boy?"

"Oh, but the little village was pretty, after all, and the little house was pleasant if it wasn't very big."

"But they didn't suit such a handsome boy as you, who ought to have been born a prince and to live in a palace."

"Oh, I don't care. They all loved me there, and I want to see mamma and Lucia and Robbie. Oh, take me back, take me back!" and he stretched out his hands pleadingly.

"But you know they are very plain, common people; people you never cared to see again."

"Don't say that; oh, don't! I didn't mean it, it isn't so. I love them, and they love me. Please take me back again."

"But you'll have to wear ugly, coarse clothes, you know."

"I don't care; I'm sick of fine ones."

“ And you’ll have to go to school, and you know you hate that.”

“ But I had lots of fun, all the same. The boys and girls all knew each other, and we had such good times together. I’d like to study now, I know I would, and I’d just do my very best. Oh, oh, I do want to go back, away from everything here ! ” and again Phil broke down and cried harder than ever.

“ Well, I must say that you are a hard boy to please, with all your notions,” said the fairy with a frown. “ You’d better know your own mind the next time.”

“ But there won’t be any ‘ next time,’ ” gasped Phil. “ If I once get there I’ll never want to go away again. I’ve had enough.”

“ You mustn’t forget that you’ll have to work, ‘ pick up sticks,’ and do all that sort of thing. Remember how you hated it, how sick you were of it.”

“ Oh, yes, I remember all about it,

indeed I do. But I'd just like to work and 'pick up sticks' again, if I could only see mamma and all the rest of them—and Jerry and Jill, and Rover and Spot. Oh, let me go, do let me go! If you don't I'll cry my poor eyes out," and again he stretched out his arms pleadingly.

"Why, Phil, my dear, what's the matter?" said a soothing voice that sounded strangely like his dear mother's. "What is it? What has happened?" and Phil sat up on the hay looking bewildered and frightened, while the tears fairly rained down his flushed cheeks.

"Oh, mamma, where am I?" he asked, clinging to her as if he feared some one would tear him away. "Where is the fairy and the golden chariot with wings? And what has become of the beautiful house and all my new clothes?"

"Why, what are you talking about?" asked Robbie, with astonishment.

“ But what has become of the fairy? ” asked Phil again, rubbing his eyes and looking around in an uncertain way. “ And is that Robbie? ”

“ Why, yes, my dear, and you must have been here asleep on the hay for ever so long. We looked for you everywhere, and Robbie was really frightened for fear you were lost. You must have been dreaming, I think. ”

“ Am I really here with you, mamma? ” he asked, beginning to be himself again, and looking anxiously around as if everything were new and strange. “ Oh, I’m so glad; I thought I never would be here any more, ” and again he stopped to cry, but this time the tears were great shining drops of joy.

“ What makes you cry then, if you’re so glad? ” asked Robbie doubtfully. “ You’ve just had a dream, I guess, and that’s what makes you act so queer. ”

“ Oh, was it a dream? ” echoed Phil, catching his breath. “ I’m just as glad

as I can be, for I thought I was never going to see you again as long as I lived. I want to stay right in this village and this house, and never go away any more." Then he told them all about his dream and the wonderful things he had seen, and Robbie and Lucia would hardly let him stop, and thought it must have been perfectly beautiful.

"But not so nice as our dear, pleasant home," replied Phil, and that was the very last of the fault-finding, discontented little boy.

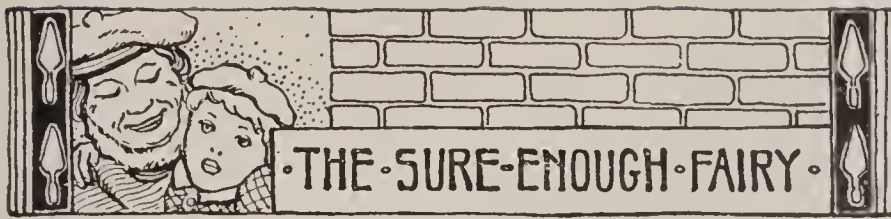
The wise fairy had taught him a good lesson, and as the happy weeks went by he loved his little home and all the dear ones in it more and more; the village seemed a very pretty place, and even the old red schoolhouse had a little charm of its own. He was so bright, happy, and busy that everybody liked and respected him, and he was never more contented than when he went his daily round of work "picking up sticks."



THE “SURE-ENOUGH” FAIRY

• • •

*Seven, eight,
Lay them straight.'*



“BIG TIM” it had always been, and “Big Tim” it was likely to be to the end of the chapter, for he was head and shoulders above everybody else, and so big every way as to make all the little folks who went to Sunday-school think of the great giant Goliath, whom young David killed with the stone from his little sling.

To be sure Big Tim was nothing but a bricklayer, but “a man’s a man for a’ that,” and he did his work so well, was so honest and faithful, and withal so tender-hearted and generous, that he was truly one of “nature’s noblemen,” and so had the right to carry his broad shoulders and big head with an air a prince might envy, and step with a tread that would grace a czar.

Big Tim was always bright and cheery,

and all his friends—and he had many and many of them—liked nothing better than to see his friendly smile and hear his hearty greeting. But with all this he was often very sad and anxious, for ten-year-old Tim, his only son, the joy of his great, warm heart and the light of his big, honest blue eyes, instead of being stout, strong, and hearty, as Big Tim thought his son ought to be—poor Little Tim was puny and delicate, with pale cheeks, slender arms, tender little body, and poor little feet that turned in instead of out, so that he was lame and awkward and could not run, skip, and jump in the way the other boys did.

For all that, he was quite as smart as any of them, stood right up at the head of his class when he was in school, and when visitors came, was pretty sure to be called upon to speak or to sing, for he had a high, sweet voice, clear and musical, that every one was glad to hear, and a happy, hearty way with him, so like

his father's, that no one ever thought of calling him anything but "Little Tim."

He loved his school, of course he did, as all bright and good children do, and was never willing to stay away when it was possible for him to go. But there was something he loved still better, and that was to play the little bricklayer, as he did during the long summer vacations, and in the shorter ones too as they came along one after the other. Nothing in all the world was quite as nice as that, especially when some fine, great building was going up, whose towering stories he could count, and in whose strong walls he took great pride, because he and his father had helped them to rise.

Big Tom too liked nothing better than to have such a dear little helper at his side. He would catch the slight figure up under his arm at the foot of the tall ladder, and then mount it with steady step, up, up, carrying his small load as if it were the easiest thing in the world.

Then Little Tim would laugh and laugh with delight, fish his baby trowel out of the depths of his father's pocket, dip it in the mortar, and lay brick after brick evenly in its place, singing merrily in his sweetest notes :

“Seven, eight, lay them straight,
Seven, eight, lay them straight.
I must count them correctly, and then I must wait ;
I must count them correctly, and then I must wait,
Must wait, wait, wait.”

Big Tim was so good a workman that he was seldom out of a job, and so it was that Little Tim's happy song became a familiar sound. The rough men loved to hear it as they went about their work, the passers-by would stop to listen, as “Seven, eight, lay them straight; seven, eight, lay them straight, straight, straight,” rang sweetly out on the soft summer air like a breath of melody from another world.

Little Tim was one of the happy mortals who believe all the old nursery leg-

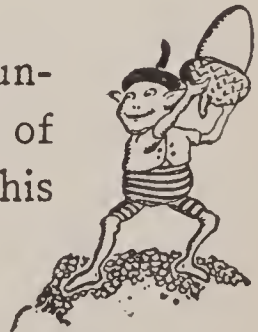
ends. He was devoted to Santa Claus and his reindeer, stood in awe of Bluebeard and his doings, and exulted in Jack the Giant-killer. He loved the flowers, the woods, the mountains, imagined odd little brownies glancing about here and there, and dainty elves dancing in the silvery moonlight, and was certain that kind fairies watched over good children to smooth their pathways.

He had a firm belief, way down in the very bottom of his heart, that if he was pure and true, some good, tender-hearted fairy would some day take pity on his poor, crooked little feet, and with a touch of her fairy sceptre would straighten them out, and at the same time make him well and strong, so that he could run and play as the other boys did, and by and by earn good wages, like his father.

He was singing away one bright, sunshiny morning, high up on the walls of the new Oliver Bank Building, where his



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father was at work, and where his little trowel was as busy as anybody's, and the sweet notes rang out fresh and clear :

“Seven, eight, lay them straight,
Seven, eight, lay them straight.
I must count them correctly, and then I must wait,
Must wait—wait—w-a-i-t.”

He was not thinking of the words nor of his work either, although he was quite unconsciously taking pains that each brick should lie exactly on the line. His thoughts were off on a journey, flitting about here and there, glancing at the little boys way below him who were playing leap-frog, or at the little girls far off in the distance chasing their hoops, and then returning almost sadly to himself, wondering whether the time would ever come when he too could have such jolly times as they were having. The tender-hearted fairy must surely know what a good boy he was trying to be, and how anxious he was to do all his work well. Where was she? and why didn't she come

and make him well? He was almost tired of waiting for her, and some of the big tears gathering in his soft blue eyes were almost ready to fall for fear she had forgotten him.

So when on hearing a little unusual rustle, he turned to see what it was, and caught sight of a vision of beauty just at the top of the tall ladder not far off, it was perhaps no wonder that he suddenly stopped his singing, dropped his trowel, and gazed in speechless wonder. Was it indeed the good fairy at last?

She was a little creature, all in a lovely blue that looked like a bit of the summer sky, with nodding plumes on her big hat, as white as the soft, fleecy clouds over his head, and long curls flowing over her shoulders like the bright hue of a golden sunset.

Little Tim longed to cry out with surprise and delight, but held his breath for fear she would vanish. But no, she was coming directly toward him, holding the



hand of the superintendent of the building, Mr. Morris. Here she was, close by, and as Mr. Morris turned to give some directions to Big Tim, she spoke:



“ Say, little boy, what made you stop singing when you saw me? ”

Little Tim was almost startled that she should speak like common mortals, but it gave him courage. Looking at her with wondering eyes, he asked anxiously and hardly above a whisper :



“ Oh, are you a fairy? ”

“ A fairy ! ” repeated the vision, with a merry laugh. “ Why, no. What makes you ask such a funny question? I am nothing but a little girl, just as you are nothing but a little boy. ”



“ Oh, I’m so sorry. I just thought you were the good fairy I’m waiting for, ” he replied in a disappointed tone.



“ That is too funny for anything, though sometimes I wish I was a fairy just for a little while, you know. But I’m nothing but Daisy, only Daisy. ”

“Oh, then you must be a flower, a big, beautiful flower out of fairyland,” and Little Tim gazed at her admiringly.

“Why, you funny boy. I’m just a girl, Daisy, Daisy Oliver, and I live in the big house up on the hill. Guess you know it, don’t you? It’s my papa that keeps the bank that is building this big, new building. I heard you singing, and so I begged nurse to let Mr. Morris bring me up here. What made you stop when you saw me? I just wanted you to go right on, because it sounded too sweet for anything, just as if it came down from the clouds.”

“But as long as you aren’t a fairy, I’m sorry you came up.”

“Why?”

“Because now you see I am so lame and have such crooked feet, I’m afraid you won’t want to hear me sing any more.”

“Is that what you want a good fairy for, to make your feet all straight?”

asked Daisy shyly, gently smoothing the slender little hand he held out to her. "I'm so sorry," she added with sympathy.

"Then if you were a fairy, you would help me, wouldn't you? Oh, I just thought you were, and I'm so sorry," and Little Tim found it hard work to keep from crying. But he would have been much ashamed if he had cried.

Daisy began to feel guilty because she was nothing but a girl, and to talk of something else, said abruptly:

"Mr. Morris says that your name is Little Tim, and that my papa knows your papa. I'm awful glad he does, because now we can be friends, and you will sing for me, won't you? Please sing now."

The two children sat down together on a big pile of timber, and Little Tim sang and sang, while Daisy kept time with her dainty little foot, or joined in when she could, her tender heart full of delight in the song and of sympathy with the little

singer. Then they chattered away as if they were great friends until Mr. Morris came for her. As Little Tim saw the bright vision start down the ladder, he looked longingly after her, not quite certain whether she were not, after all, a vanishing dream of the fairyland of which he thought so often.

Perched on her father's knee in the great library, before the big blazing fire, Daisy was happy, but trembling with eagerness for the promised permission to tell the experiences of the day.

"Now, then," finally said Mr. Oliver, "if you can't wait any longer, you may begin. But break it gently, pet; don't surprise me too much, all at once."

"Well, popsie dear, it's just about a little boy, 'Little Tim,' and something I want you to let me do."

"About a boy! Already! Seems to me that's rather previous for a young miss of ten years. But what of him?"

“Mr. Morris says that you know his papa, ‘Big Tim,’ and that he is splendid. I saw him to-day, and he’s even bigger than you are, you dear popsie, you.”

“He is not to blame for that, as I see. But, yes, I know him, and he is a very worthy, capable fellow.”

“Well, he has a little boy, and he’s ten years old, just like me.”

“You don’t object to that, do you? I don’t see how you can very well help it.”

“Why no, of course I don’t. I like it. And he has yellow hair, like mine, and blue eyes, like mine, and his face is pretty.”

“Just like mine, I suppose,” put in Mr. Oliver.

“Oh, you naughty popsie, of course I didn’t mean that,” said Daisy, giving him a kiss and a squeeze. “And then,” in a low voice, “he has no dear mamma, just like poor me, and besides, oh, popsie, he is not very strong; he is lame and his

poor little feet are all crooked, and not straight and nice like mine. Isn't it too very bad?" and Daisy's sweet face was full of sympathy.

"Yes, indeed, my precious little daughter. And doesn't it make you feel how thankful you ought to be that you are well and strong, and that your little feet are free to come and go as they will?" and he kissed his dainty darling as if she were indeed the most precious thing in all the world.

"It made me wish that he was well and strong too. And popsie, if you could only hear him sing! It's just as if he didn't know he was singing, just as if it sung itself. It made me so happy to hear him, and it seemed as if he forgot all about his crooked feet while he sang."

"Come, come, this is a very pretty little story you are making up; you don't expect me to believe it all, do you?"

"Of course I do, and I'm going to take you to hear him sing. But there's

something else to tell, and it's very funny. It just makes me laugh to think of it. He thought I was a fairy, a real, live fairy."

"Well, that was funny, true enough. But you're papa's fairy pet, anyway."

"Oh, yes, I know that; but not such a real fairy as he is waiting for."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Something very nice, that you will like. He believes that kind fairies watch over little boys and girls, so he is trying to be very good and true; for he thinks that if he is, some one of them will come some day, and with her magic wand and some mysterious words make him all well and his feet all straight. Do you think she will, popsie? Please say yes."

"What do you think about it?"

Daisy was very quiet for a while, leaning her golden head on her father's shoulder, and gently stroking his face with her soft little hand, and then she asked quickly:

“ Popsie, did grandma leave me much money? ”

“ Enough to keep you from starving, I think. ”

“ Why, I thought you bought what we had to eat with the money you get out of the bank? ”

“ Guess I do; that’s a fact, ” he said laughingly. “ What next? ”

“ What do you do with all the rest then? ”

“ I am taking the best care I can of it, so that when you have become a nice young lady and a sensible woman, you may have it to do good with. ”

“ Couldn’t I do good with some of it now, if I wanted to? ”

“ What do you know about ‘doing good’ with it, I’d like to know? Another rather previous suggestion for a ten-year-old, seems to me. What are we coming to? ”

Daisy was again very quiet for a little time, but her busy brain was hard at

work. Her father wondered what would come next, and for a moment did not catch the connection as she asked:

“ You remember about the portrait show, don’t you, popsie ? ”

“ The one last fall, when we sent dear mamma’s portrait and yours, you mean? Yes, of course I do. ”

“ You know it was given for a big hospital, where boys and girls go who are lame, and where they are made all well and straight, like other people. ”

“ Yes, I know; the Orthopedic Hospital, where deformities in children are prevented or cured. ”

“ I think that is a very funny name; I wonder if it takes much money to go there. Do you suppose the doctor there could turn Little Tim’s feet around so that they would be straight and nice like mine? ”

“ Hospitals are expensive places sometimes, and doctors, or rather surgeons, do some very wonderful things nowadays. ”

Daisy slipped her thinking-cap on again; there was another silence, and then she asked eagerly:

“Didn’t the English artist say that he thought my portrait looked like a fairy’s picture? Nurse says he did.”

“Yes, I believe he said something of the kind.”

“And Little Tim thought I was a fairy. Wasn’t it funny? Well, I want to be a fairy, a good fairy, just for once, and, please popsie, you must help.”

“What’s all this? Help you to be a fairy and fly away off to fairyland? Not a bit of it. You’d never come back to your poor old popsie, and that wouldn’t do, you know.”

“But, popsie dear, we don’t really believe in fairies and fairyland, as Little Tim does, you know; we only play we do. But couldn’t we be a kind of good fairy to poor Little Tim?”

“We can always be ‘a kind of good fairy’ to any one who is in trouble, or

needs help that we can give. But what is it you wish to do for Little Tim?"

"I want to put him in the big hospital with the funny name, where the doctor will make him all well, and to pay him for doing it with some of the money grandma gave me. Then wouldn't I truly be Little Tim's good fairy, just as much as if I came out of fairyland? And can't I, can't I do it, popsie dear?"

"Well, you're my precious fairy, little one, and you keep your old popsie's heart as fresh as a May morning and as tender as spring. How could I say 'No' to you, even if I wished to?"

"Oh, I know what that means," exclaimed Daisy ecstatically, covering her father's face with glowing kisses, and slipping down from his knee to execute a gay little dance around his chair, "and I'm just too glad for anything."

"But you must not be glad in too much of a hurry, my dear little daughter. We shall have to learn just how much it



would cost, how long it would take, what the surgeons think about it, whether Little Tim would be willing to go, and whether his father would consent to it. You see it takes lots of thinking to be a good fairy on a large scale.”

“ But Little Tim’ll be only too glad to go; I just know he will. And I’ll beg the doctor to make him well. If he only hears him sing I’m sure he’ll try with all his might. And then you must make Big Tim say ‘ Yes.’ ”

And so one fine day it all came about that Little Tim found himself in the big hospital with the funny name, where he had a little white bed in a little white room, which was fragrant with the flowers that Daisy’s tender hands had brought, and bright with the gay pictures she had hung on the walls.

The surgeons had told Little Tim that the poor, crooked feet could be made straight, but that they would have to be cut and bandaged, that weights would

have to be fastened to them, and that he would have to be bound to a board, so that the lower part of his body could not move at all. It had all sounded very terrible to poor Little Tim; but there was a brave heart in the puny body, and he screwed his courage up, ready to suffer anything if he could only be like the other boys, and ready to bear almost any amount of pain when Daisy told him how much she wanted him to be "all well."

But the worst was all over without his knowing anything about it, though it seemed very strange to him to be lying on that little white bed, quite unable to move his feet, and feeling almost as if he did not have any. Were the surgeons indeed sure that they would come out all right, and that he would be able to run and jump as the rest of the boys did?

"Yes, quite sure," and how happy he was, and so obedient and patient.

Daisy brought him books, blocks, and games, and he would sing, sing, sing,

sometimes nearly all the day long. Many of the poor little suffering boys and girls in the long wards would almost forget their pains as they listened to the sweet tones. He liked to sit propped up in bed and play with his blocks as if they were bricks, and then would come the old refrain that Daisy loved to hear:

“Seven, eight, lay them straight,
Seven, eight, lay them straight.
I must count them correctly, and then I must wait,
Must wait, w-a-i-t—w-a-i-t.”

He was such a dear, grateful little patient, so happy, even while he was so helpless, that his doctor and nurse could hardly do enough for him, and with Daisy and her father to keep an eye on him besides, it is no wonder that he had a good start and gained rapidly from the very first. Oh, what a thankful heart he had!

But a great disappointment was in store for him, for Mr. Oliver was going away off across the water, and had decided to take Daisy with him. She hardly knew

how to go and leave Little Tim, and he was afraid that his heart was quite broken at the mere thought of such a thing. What would that little room be without her? and how would he know one day from another if she did not come?

“But you’ll be all well when I come back,” she said hopefully, trying to comfort him, “and I’ll bring you some pretty things and have lots to tell you too. I’ll write you some letters and you must write to me, and when I get home, how nice it will be, won’t it?”

So Little Tim consoled himself with that idea, meaning to get well as fast as he could, and, although it sometimes seemed slow work and he was almost discouraged, he never gave up, but kept bright and cheerful all the time, singing his sweet little songs and doing exactly as doctor and nurse wished to have him. At last came his reward. When he walked out of the big hospital, a little slowly, but with feet like those of other

boys, and stronger and better than he had ever been, every one rejoiced with him, although they hated to have him go.

Daisy was away for many months. When she returned she could hardly believe that it was indeed Little Tim who ran to meet her, Little Tim now bright and strong, with red cheeks and brown hands, not a bit lame, and with feet "all straight" like her own.

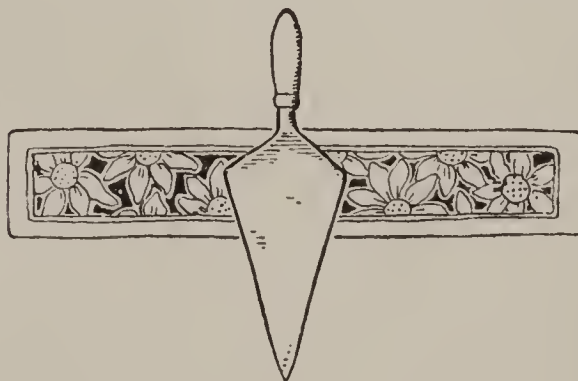
"Oh, popsie, how glad it makes me!" she whispered, half crying for very joy. "I was a good fairy, after all, wasn't I? So were you too, a great big fairy, and aren't we happy, though?"

"My dear little daughter," he answered, "there is no happiness in all this wide world like doing for others. You have much; much will be required of you; and opportunities are always at hand for playing the good fairy."

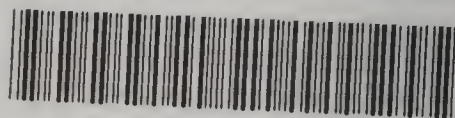
"Even if she is nothing but a little girl," said Little Tim to his father, "she is my very, very own good fairy, my

sure-enough fairy, and I'll never believe that she didn't slip out of fairyland in some way, and come down here to live, just because she knew how hard I was trying to be a good boy and how I wanted to be like other boys."

"And to reward her," replied Big Tim, with a trembling voice, "you must be a good, faithful boy and man in every way, honest and true, frank and manly, and then all the good fairies will help you to be useful and successful."



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